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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ADDIS ABABA 000288

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2020

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SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT - A/S FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS CARSON MEETS  
FRENCH COUNTERPART

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Classified By: USAU Ambassador Michael A. Battle, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) January 30, 2010, 4:00 p.m.; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

[1](#)2. (U) Participants:

United States  
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson  
NSC Senior Director Michelle Gavin  
USAU Ambassador Michael Battle  
Special Advisor for the Great Lakes Howard Wolpe  
USAU A/DCM Joel Maybury  
USAU Political Officer Lauren Ladenson  
AU Desk Officer Ryan Bowles (notetaker)

France  
Director-General for Africa Stephane Gompertz  
Ambassador to Ethiopia Jean-Christophe Belliard  
Political Officer Frederic Chole

[1](#)3. (C) Summary: During a meeting on the margins of the African Union Summit, A/S Carson and French Africa Director Stephane Gompertz discussed the next steps for Guinea, including the ECOWAS observer mission and how to resume foreign assistance. On Niger, Gompertz expressed French displeasure over Tandja's extension of term, but said France had no plans to cut its foreign aid. Turning to Nigeria, Gompertz said the January 28 joint statement sent a good message. On Madagascar, Gompertz thought that both SADC mediator Joaquim Chissano and other parties had made huge blunders. He said the French and U.S. positions parted ways on who we consider to be at fault. France does not favor any of the political actors, including the deposed president, while the U.S. considers coup leader Rajoelina to be the villain.

[1](#)4. (C) Summary (cont): Moving to Chad, Gompertz expressed concern about news that the government was demanding an end to the MINURCAT peacekeeping mission by March 15. He hoped an accommodation could be reached by renaming the

mission or changing the mandate. On the Great Lakes Region, Gompertz said that Paris and Kigali had resumed diplomatic relations. He concurred that MONUC should not be terminated this year, as the DRC wished. Gompertz alleged that Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony was in Khartoum in late 2009, according to sensitive reporting from the French DGSE. Finally, on Sahel counter-terrorism issues, Gompertz said Algeria was blocking the long-sought conference on coordinating counter-terrorism policy in the Sahel. End Summary.

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Guinea: Progress being made  
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15. (SBU) A/S Carson met with French Africa Director Stephane Gompertz on January 30 on the sidelines of the African Union (AU) Summit in Addis Ababa. Carson began by raising Guinea, saying that Morocco played a useful role, and things seem to be turning out well in Guinea. Burkinabe President Blaise Compaore deserves much credit. Secretary Clinton was scheduled to call him and offer her thanks soon. Gompertz feels that Compaore wants to go slowly because he is concerned about supporters of coup leader Dadis Camara using force. Paris wants Morocco to continue to be at the center of resolution in Guinea, but also does not want to exclude the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

16. (SBU) Carson said that the U.S. will participate in the upcoming security sector assessment, and we are prepared to be financially supportive of these and other upcoming steps towards getting Guinea back on its feet. He said we will fund elections via the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and re-establish our substantial aid activities. Gompertz said France will also resume, but not with any more money than before the coup. Principally,

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France will un-freeze the Conakry-Airport expressway project that it was funding.

17. (SBU) While the U.S. has not passed any names to Guinean officials about who would be "unacceptable" for office, the French have suggested some members of the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) who would be "toxic." Carson believes that no military should take part in the transition election.

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Nigeria: Joint statement a success  
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18. (SBU) Both Carson and Gompertz felt the January 28 joint statement was a great success. Carson is pessimistic about the situation in Nigeria. We thought ailing President Yar'adua was heading back to Abuja last week, but our information turned out to be incorrect. Senior Nigerian leadership are still engaged in self-deception, evidenced by the recent cabinet declaration that Yar'adua is "not incapable" of leading. Gompertz said former Nigerian President Obasanjo is frustrated by his inability to influence the current situation, which he caused by selecting a sick Yar'adua as President in 2006. Carson said the U.S. wants a stable transition without military involvement.

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Niger  
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19. (C) France is embarrassed by the situation in Niger, created by Nigerien President Tandja's successful hijacking of the constitution for a third term in office. Tandja told French President Sarkozy in March 2008 of his inability to influence the situation, in part because the Nigerien opposition is disorganized. According to Gompertz, the Nigerien opposition regularly visits Paris and tells of big

plans to hold demonstrations and rallies, however, in the end these events never take place. He believes a military coup is possible, and understands from ECOWAS that mediation is more or less dead.

¶11. (SBU) Carson responded that we had cut all non-humanitarian assistance, which was difficult since Niger is an important actor on counter-terrorism. Gompertz said that France does not intend to cut aid, even though his country's assistance makes up nearly half of Niger's national budget, because he worries about destabilizing the country further. He lamented AU rules, which prevented the AU from taking automatic and decisive action on Niger because the third term was via constitutional means.

¶12. (SBU) Gompertz said he will try and see the Nigerien Prime Minister soon; according to him, the Foreign Minister is moderate but has no leverage. Gompertz said ECOWAS was waiting because Nigeria was paralyzed due to Yar'adua's condition.

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Madagascar: Agree to disagree  
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¶13. (SBU) Gompertz raised the subject of Madagascar by saying that this was "obviously a very embarrassing subject" for France. He thought the Maputo I and Addis Ababa agreements were a good start, but that SADC mediator Chissano blundered on Maputo III by not having full participation by all parties. The recommendations were then presented as decisions, when all parties had not participated in the agreement.

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¶14. (SBU) Meanwhile, Gompertz said, coup leader Rajoelina was also "stupid" and resorted to unilateral measures like canceling his acceptance of Maputo I. France thinks AU Chairperson Jean Ping's initiative is a good one, and said that former Mozambican President Joachim Chissano was upset merely at Ping's method -- not at the substance.

¶15. (C) Gompertz said Rajoelina visited Paris recently and met with him and President Sarkozy's Africa Advisor Joyandet at the Elysee. Joyandet told Rajoelina that Ping's proposal was the last deal, and that he cannot avoid the co-presidency. Rajoelina had no substantive response. Gompertz said his information from Antananarivo indicated that Rajoelina would be unable to pay the army from March onwards.

¶16. (C) Carson said that we need to avoid having the mediation favor the "villain" in the situation -- coup leader Rajoelina. We favor an inclusive, broad outcome with all political actors included. Gompertz responded by saying that this was the point of disagreement between the U.S. and France -- for France, they are all villains, none caring about the Malagasy people.

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Chad/MINURCAT  
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¶17. (SBU) Government of Chad demands that the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) leave Chad by March 15 are unrealistic, said Gompertz. He noted that the Chadians believe the mission has done nothing useful, has not built anything, and mostly stays at the airport. This is unlike the European Union Forces (EUFOR) mission, which Chad thinks is a useful endeavor.

¶18. (SBU) Carson said it would be a disaster for MINURCAT to leave prior to South Sudan's independence referendum in

March 2011, as we do not yet know if the vote will lead to instability along the Chad-Sudan border. Gompertz opined that if Chadian President Deby sticks to the March 15 deadline, we should offer a face-saving device, like changing the mission's name or mandate.

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Great Lakes Region  
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¶19. (SBU) Gompertz relayed news that Paris and Kigali recently resumed diplomatic relations. French FM Bernard Kouchner visited Kigali to mark the occasion. Rwandan President Kagame stressed the need for investment and a fresh start. Kouchner was impressed by the new Rwandan foreign minister. Rwandan talks with Kinshasa are going okay, but there is tension in civil society on the talks. This tension was explained to Kouchner by the Archbishop of Kigali, who said "look, we had a genocide here."

¶20. (C) Gompertz said Kouchner discussed the future of the UN Mission in Congo (MONUC) while in Kigali, and everyone emphasized to him the need to train Rwandan forces. Carson said we want to continue MONUC. Gompertz wondered aloud if DRC President Kabila wanted to end MONUC for domestic political reasons, or so that he could rig the elections. Special Advisor Wolpe responded that in his opinion it was for domestic political reasons only.

¶21. (S) Gompertz said that the French intelligence service had sensitive reporting which indicated that Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony was in Khartoum six months ago. Carson said that if that were true it would be an enormous bad faith gesture by the Sudanese government, and would show the north's intention to tear apart the Southern independence movement. It would mean that the north could not be trusted as an honest partner. Carson

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said we needed to be 100 percent sure before we could act on that kind of information.

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Sahel Counter-terrorism  
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¶22. (C) Gompertz thinks the security situation in the Sahel remains fairly unchanged from the Paris meetings on Sahel counter-terrorism (CT) issues six months ago. He said Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM) is expanding into northern Burkina Faso and recruiting in Senegal. The DGSE believes AQIM will find weakness in northern Nigeria.

¶23. (C) Gompertz saw the Malian Foreign Minister on January 29. The FM regretted criticism leveled against his country for lack of action, and insisted steps were being taken against AQIM. He said no one supports the Sahel CT conference favored by the West, and that Algeria is actively blocking it. Gompertz added that in his view the Algerians are dismissive of the problem and do not want to act. Carson said he was troubled by the lack of regional cooperation. Gompertz said that Sahel issues were poorly understood in the EU, and asked Carson to help him educate northern and eastern EU member states on the AQIM problem. He said that Lisbon implementation made it even harder for the EU to take a comprehensive look at the Sahel.

¶24. (U) A/S Carson has not cleared this message.

YATES